



Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Laboratory Capacity

Get and Keep America Open: Supporting states, tribes, localities, and territories

Key Concepts

- **HHS Coordinates COVID-19 Testing.** [↗](#) The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) works across the U.S. government, including with the Department of Defense, to review potential products from public and private sectors to identify promising candidates that could detect, protect against or treat COVID-19 for development and licensure. HHS is providing rapid point-of-care tests and devices to public health labs (PHLs) in every state and territory, and Washington, D.C.
- **FDA Issues Emergency Use Authorizations for COVID-19 Tests.** [↗](#) The FDA has issued several Emergency Use Authorizations (EUAs) for the use of new diagnostic tests to detect the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which causes COVID-19. During public health emergencies declared under section 564 of the FD&C Act, the FDA is able to issue EUAs when certain criteria are met that allows for the use and distribution of potentially life-saving medical products to diagnose, treat, or prevent the disease, which can include diagnostic tests.
- **CDC Provides Guidance and Resources for Laboratories.** CDC provides interim guidance and resources for laboratory professionals working with specimens from persons under investigation (PUI) for COVID-19. In order to protect health care workers and laboratorians, CDC provides laboratory biosafety guidelines for handling and processing specimens associated with COVID-19.

Resources from CDC

Resources for laboratories to conduct testing to identify new cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

CDC is supporting this critical work by providing:

- [Information for Laboratories](#). This page includes interim guidance and resources for laboratory professionals working with specimens from persons under investigation (PUI) for coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).
- [International Reagent Resources \(IRR\)](#).  The IRR acquires, authenticates, and produces reagents that scientists need to carry out basic research and develop improved diagnostic tests, vaccines, and detection methods. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and HHS have simplified the process for states and territories to help public health labs access diagnostics supplies and reagents for COVID-19 testing free of charge through the IRR.
- [Serology Testing for COVID-19](#). CDC has developed a new laboratory test to assist with efforts to determine how much of the U.S. population has been exposed to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.
- [Interim Guidelines for Collecting, Handling, and Testing Clinical Specimens from Persons for Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#). Proper collection of specimens is the most important step in the laboratory diagnosis of infectious disease. A specimen that is not collected correctly may lead to false negative test results. These specimen collection guidelines follow standard recommended procedures.
- [Interim Laboratory Biosafety Guidelines for Handling and Processing Specimens Associated with Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#). Until more information becomes available, precautions should be taken in handling specimens that are suspected or confirmed for SARS-CoV-2. Timely communication between clinical and laboratory staff is essential to minimize the risk incurred in handling specimens from patients with possible SARS-CoV-2 infection. Such specimens should be labeled accordingly, and the laboratory should be alerted to ensure proper specimen handling. General and specific biosafety guidelines for handling SARS-CoV-2 specimens are provided in these guidelines.
- [COVID-19 Testing at Laboratories: Questions and Answers](#). Find answers to frequently asked questions about COVID-19 testing at laboratories.
- [Diagnostic Tools and Virus: Questions and Answers](#). Find answers to frequently asked questions about requests for diagnostic tools and virus.
- [Laboratory Biosafety and COVID-19: Questions and Answers](#). Find answers to frequently asked questions about laboratory biosafety and COVID-19.
- [Testing in the US](#). This page provides a map of states and territories with one or more laboratories that have successfully verified and are currently using COVID-19 diagnostic tests. It also provides the number of specimens tested for SARS CoV-2 by CDC labs and U.S. public health laboratories.
- [What CDC is Doing](#). CDC laboratory scientists are a key line of defense in emerging health threats such as SARS-CoV-2. This page describes key CDC laboratory activities.



Resources from Other Organizations

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Other Federal Agencies

Several other federal agencies support this critical effort by providing:

- The [BEI Resources Repository](#) was established by the [National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases](#) at the National Institutes of Health to provide reagents, tools and information for studying [Category A, B, and C](#) priority pathogens, [emerging infectious disease](#) agents, non-pathogenic microbes and other microbiological materials of relevance to the research community including diagnostic developers. Centralizing these functions within BEI Resources facilitates access to these materials by the scientific community and ensures quality control of the reagents.
- [FDA: FAQs on Diagnostic Testing for SARS-CoV-2](#) provides answers to frequently asked questions relating to the development and performance of diagnostic tests for SARS-CoV-2.
- [Information about HHS and Rapid Point of Care Test](#). The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is purchasing the ID NOW COVID-19 rapid point-of-care test, developed by Abbott Diagnostics Scarborough Inc., for state, territorial and tribal public health labs.

Private Sector, Non-governmental Organizations and Academia

Various other organizations are also supporting this critical effort by providing:

- [Association of Public Health Laboratories](#). APHL is supporting member laboratories during the COVID-19 pandemic by assisting with quality testing, reporting, technical assistance and communications.
- [Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy](#). COVID-19 laboratory guidance and diagnostics resources.

More Information

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Search for specific COVID-19 guidance across CDC web pages and documents

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